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4-H LEADERSHIP A GOAL

A radio talk by Alex D. Cobb, Assistant Director of Extension Service, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware, to be delivered Saturday, September 3, 1932, in the National 4-H club radio program, broadcast by a network of 57 associate NBC radio stations.

On December first of this year, I will be turning in my twentieth annual report as an extension worker. Starting as a pioneer County Agent in Indiana, one year before the Smith-Lever Act of 1914; then as a State Club Leader, and now as an Assistant Director, each one of these reports has included something of the growth of 4-H Club Work and the results of the activities of 4-H Club members.

During the last ten years I have watched our 4-H club enrollment in little Delaware grow from 866 to more than 1800 members. There has been satisfaction in recording this growth and in summarizing the project records of these boys and girls in terms of production units and financial value.

These are the formal records required by law. They constitute the yard-stick by which our 4-H Club Work is measured. A yard-stick calibrated by numbers of enrollment, bushels of production, dollars and cents of profit or loss. Such measurements appeal to all of us because they can be seen. They are concrete and the symbols of everyday experience and usage.

But some of us have been privileged to look, and perhaps live behind the scenes in 4-H Club Work, and we know that other developments are taking place. Active participation in club meetings brings poise and confidence and a knowledge of parliamentary procedure. Recreation features with group games and music appreciation training develop closer bonds of fellowship, fair play and an appreciation of the finer things of life. All of these are a part of the everyday opportunities of every 4-H club member in addition to supervised training in the skills of important farm and home practices.

With this background of experience during their most impressionable age it is not unreasonable to expect that from the country's present enrollment of over 800,000 farm boys and girls in 4-H club work we will see a very definite and important development of farm leadership both social and economic.

There has been no definite method devised for measuring this development, and since the great majority of our former 4-H club members are still under 30 years of age, it is probably too soon to look for any well-defined universal evidences of this leadership, but it will come. As a matter of fact we are already seeing its beginnings.

In my office files I have a list of the names of 10 boys and 4 girls who were what we called state 4-H champions in Delaware ten years ago. At the end of ten years I find that with one exception they are all actively identified with Delaware farm and home life. Of the four girls, three are married. One

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is a teacher of Home Economics; another is a leader in Grange activities and a successful turkey grower; another is in partnership with her husband and father in raising pure bred cattle and seed corn. All of them have been local leaders in 4-H clubs.

Five of the young men are successful farmers with livestock and crops above the average of their community. Six of them are Agricultural College graduates, three of whom are now teachers of vocational agriculture. When things are done in their communities these people have a part in the doing.

Because the training of a future economic and social rural leadership has become such an apparent and definite goal of 4-H club work, we have developed in Delaware an organization of older and former 4-H club members, called the Order of Link in the 4-H Chain. Each year three active members and one former club member who have shown outstanding development of one or more of the 4 H's, are eligible for membership. The membership in each county constitutes a County Chapter of the Order which is the Junior Advisory Council of the County Club Agent. The officers of the state organization are the Junior Advisory Council for the State Club Office.

Under their constitution, a stated objective of the Order is "To provide leadership among rural young people of the state in activities which will add to the happiness and prosperity of rural living." Evidence of the sincerity of purpose of these young people is found in the words of Sara Moore, their Historian, in her record of the development of the organization. She writes - "The original Links signified by the clasping of hands that they were the beginning of a Chain which stands for friendship, loyalty and interest in humanity - a Chain which has possibilities so great that we young men and women are not yet able to realize them."

To have had a part in the development of this vision of responsibility on the part of these young men and women of my state is my most treasured legacy as an Extension Worker.